

Response

The claims were amended in accordance with the amendments above. The amendments to the claims are being made to clarify the invention and to focus the claims on those aspects of the invention which are a commercial priority to the assignee. All of the amendments are fully supported by the specification, claims, and figures as originally filed. No new matter is believed or intended to be involved.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claim 29 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Accordingly, claim 43 has been added to recite all of the limitations of claim 29 and its original base claim, and should therefore be in a condition for allowance.

In the Office Action dated 12/23/2004, Claims 22, 24-28, 30-40, and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Atick et al. (US 6,111,517). Claims 23 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Atick et al. in view of Sankaranarayan et al. (US 6,799,208). Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presently amended are patentable over Atick et al. and Sankaranarayan et al.

Atick et al. discloses a computer security system configured to regulate access to the computer. A camera is positioned proximate to the computer to capture images of people sitting in front of the computer (i.e. users). Using facial recognition technology, the computer determines whether a person positioned in front of the camera/computer is authorized to use the computer. If a person is authorized to use the computer, the system permits access to the computer; whereas if the person is not authorized, access to the computer is prohibited. The system also uses a screen saver program to detect user inactivity. In particular, when the screen saver program determines that the user is inactive, the system will either revoke access to the computer, or will cause the camera to capture an image to see whether an authorized user is still positioned in front of the computer. Notably, Atick et al. fails to disclose the screen saver program as triggering

the presentation of any particular image to the user, let alone the presentation of a degraded image captured by the camera. Instead, Atick et al. merely teaches the use of the screen saver program's ability to detect user inactivity in order to trigger the revocation of access or the capture of another image by the proximate camera.

Sankaranarayan et al. discloses a resource management architecture implemented in computer systems. Sankaranarayan et al. provides the example that, when an activity dynamically changes from a preferred configuration having a hardware video decoder to a fallback configuration having a software video decoder, the output of an application can be degraded in quality to a reduced-size video image on the computer monitor. The resource manager can be used to rank such configurations for ideal resource allocation. Notably, Sankaranarayan et al. fails to contemplate user inactivity, let alone doing anything to an image captured by a camera in response to the detection of user inactivity.

In stark contrast to Atick et al. and Sankaranarayan et al., all of the presently amended claims recite the capture of images with cameras that are positioned remote from the user's system. Indeed, given Atick et al.'s concern with using the camera to determine whether the user is authorized, Atick et al. fails to contemplate or suggest positioning the camera at a location remote from the user's system. Sankaranarayan et al. does not make up for this deficiency. Accordingly, the presently amended claims are patentably distinct in that they all recite the location of a camera being remote from the location of the user's system.

In addition, unlike all of the presently amended claims, the cited references fail to contemplate the degradation of an image captured by such a camera in response to a determination that the user is inactive. Applicant respectfully traverses the supposition in the Office Action that Atick et al.'s use of a screen saver program constitutes the degradation of an image captured by the camera. Instead, Atick et al. merely teaches the use of the screen saver program for its ability to detect user inactivity, and makes no explicit mention of any manipulation of images by the screen saver program. Similarly,

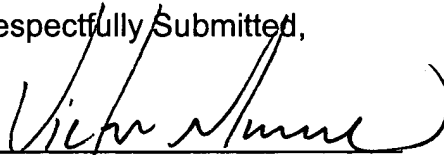
Sankaranarayan et al. merely teaches changing from a hardware video decoder to a software video decoder. Applicant respectfully submits that such a change in decoders, as taught, has nothing to do with user inactivity. In short, neither of the references teach or suggest the degradation of an image captured by a remote camera; nor do they teach performing such degradation in response to a determination that the user is inactive. Because all of the presently amended claims recite these limitations, they are patentably distinct over the art of record.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the art of record fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in each claim as presently amended. Furthermore, the art of record fails to provide any motivation to combine the limitations recited in the presently amended claims. Because of these shortcomings of the art of record, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not, and cannot, be met. MPEP 2143. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently amended claims are patentable over the art of record.

To the extent that the amendments constitute a narrowing of the claims, such narrowing of the claims should not be construed as an admission as to the merits of the prior rejections. Indeed, Applicant traverses the rejections and preserves all rights and arguments. Applicant further notes that the dependent claims include additional limitations not taught or suggested in the art of record, thus forming independent basis for novelty and non-obviousness.

Based on the foregoing, all pending claims are in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and an early notice of allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,



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